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Blind Philhellenes vs. Selective Consumers of Foreign Cultures: A Reassessment of the Ancient Greco-Roman Literary Record's Portrayal of the Gauls in Light of New Archaeological Evidence

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Blind Philhellenes vs. Selective Consumers of Foreign Cultures: A Reassessment of the Ancient Greco-Roman Literary Record's Portrayal of the Gauls in Light of New Archaeological Evidence

Abstract

The issue of perspective is intrinsic to historiography. This is evident in the ancient Greco-Roman literary record, specifically the limits placed on its value to modern academics by the ethnographic biases of its authors. However, with the rise of the post-processual approach to archaeology over the past thirty years, modern historians have begun to address this issue. By utilizing the impartial records offered by excavation, these scholars have increasingly managed to circumvent ancient authorial subjectivity and reevaluate the modern preconceptions it created of the world of antiquity. An example of the archaeological record's value in reassessing the inherent prejudices of the ancient literary record can be seen in the instance of the archaic-era Ionian Greek colony of Massalia. While the ancient writings on Massalia have provided modern historians with a limited overview of this Greek polis, their potential for offering genuine insight is denigrated by the cultural bias evident in their overly positive portrayal of Massalia and their pejorative treatment of the native Gauls. However, by examining archaeological excavations of Massalia and surrounding Gallic sites, modern historians have begun to sidestep this Hellenic literary bias and its associated cultural stereotypes, and gain valuable insight into the much more complex reality of relations and interactions that existed between the Massaliotes and their Gallic neighbors. Overall, although ancient historians portray Massalia as a powerful bastion of civilizing Hellenism amongst the barbarian tribes of Gaul, the modern archaeological record indicates that this characterization is largely false, and that in reality Massalia's Gallic trading partners were not Philhellenes who attempted to imitate Greek culture, but selective consumers who incorporated a limited range of Greek goods into their own existing cultural systems.

The issue of perspective is intrinsic to historiography. This is evident in the ancient Greco-Roman literary record, specifically in the limits placed on its value to modern academics by the ethnographic biases of its authors.¹ With the rise of the post-processual approach to archaeology over the past thirty years, modern historians have begun to address this issue. By utilizing the impartial records offered by excavation, these scholars have increasingly managed to circumvent ancient authorial subjectivity and reevaluate the modern preconceptions of the world of antiquity that it created.² An example of the archaeological record's value in reassessing the inherent prejudices of the ancient literary record can be seen in the instance of the archaic-era Ionian Greek colony of Massalia.

While the ancient writings on Massalia have provided modern historians with a limited overview of this Greek polis, their potential for offering genuine insight is denigrated by the cultural bias evident in their overly positive portrayal of Massalia and their pejorative treatment of the native Gauls.³ However, by examining archaeological excavations of Massalia and surrounding Gallic sites, modern historians have begun to sidestep this Hellenic literary bias and its associated cultural stereotypes, and gain valuable insight into the much more complex reality of relations and interactions that existed between the Massaliotes and their Gallic neighbors.⁴ Overall, although ancient historians portray Massalia as a powerful bastion of civilizing Hellenism amongst the barbarian tribes of Gaul, the modern archaeological record indicates that this characterization is largely false; and that in reality, Massalia's Gallic trading partners were not Philhellenes who attempted to imitate Greek culture, but

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¹ "Mediterranean history that relies solely on texts is history seen through Greek and Roman eyes and filtered through Greek and Roman cultural dispositions, prejudices, and cosmologies." Michael Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism: Consumption, Entanglement, and Violence in Ancient Mediterranean France* (Berkeley: University of California, 2010), 43-44. See also Greg Woolf's article "Saving the Barbarian" in Erich Gruen, ed. *Cultural Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2011) 255-267 for further discussion of the major obstacles to taking ancient historians' accounts of the Gauls at face value.

² cf. Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 14-24. For detailed analysis on how ancient colonial encounters, as lopsidedly related by members of the colonizing powers (Greek and Rome), have influenced the cultural construction of modern European colonial ideologies and discourse, which in turn have influenced modern scholars engaged in exploration of the ancient colonial encounters, see Sara Owen, "Analogy, Archaeology and Archaic Greek Colonization," in *Ancient Colonizations: Analogy, Similarity and Difference*, eds. Henry Hurst and Sara Owen (London: Duckworth, 2005), 5-22. The same idea is expressed in footnote 42.

³ The ability of the ancient literary record to offer insight into the world of antiquity is also hindered by the fact that the majority of its surviving works were generally written centuries after the events they describe took place. Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 105.

⁴ "What archaeology offers is access to the material dimension of a colonial encounter and to the processes of daily life through which the colonial situation was experienced and worked out by ordinary people" Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 20. See also Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 15-24 for further discussion of the value of archaeology in offering insight into ancient, pre-capitalist, colonial encounters.

selective consumers who incorporated a limited range of Greek goods into their own existing cultural systems.

In spite of its aforementioned flaws, the ancient literary record is relatively valuable in terms of offering modern scholars a very basic overview of Massalia. For example the ancient sources generally agree that Massalia was of Phocaeen origins.⁵ This ancient consensus on Massalia's origins points modern scholars to the idea that, like their Phocaeen forefathers, the Massaliotes were a sea-faring people with a socio-economic focus on maritime-trade.⁶ Furthermore, ancient Greek and Roman literary sources also generally agree on the foundation date of Massalia as being approximate to 600 BCE,⁷ which allows modern scholars to confidently date its beginnings to the archaic era of Greek history. In addition, the ancient historians' generally concurrent descriptions of Massalia's foundation myth,⁸ in which the original Phocaeen colonists were welcomed by local Gallic tribe the Segobrigians, point modern scholars to the idea that Massalia was in close contact with the indigenous Gallic populations from its beginnings.⁹

The ancient literary record also provides limited, but nonetheless valuable information on Massalia's location and topography. For example, ancient historians' accounts generally coincide in their descriptions of Massalia as being situated near the mouth of the Rhone, on a rocky peninsula whose landed side was fortified by an external wall, and which otherwise offered access to a natural

⁵ Descriptions of Massalia's Phocaeen origins by ancient authors: Thuc., 1.13.6; Strabo, 4.1.4; Paus. 10.8; Livy, 5.34; Justin, 43.3, 43.7-8; Plut., *Solon*, 2.3; Aristotle, *ap. Athen.*, 13.576a. "Ancient texts are unanimous in describing the first settlers of Massalia as Greeks from the city of Phocaea." Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 105. "That Massalia was a Phocaeen foundation is clearly stated by all our ancient sources, led by Thucydides, and followed by Strabo, Pausanias, Livy and others." Alfred Trevor Hodge, *Ancient Greek France*, (London: G. Duckworth, 1998), 64.

⁶ Hodge, *Ancient Greek France*, 65. This inference is further solidified by a fragment of Aristotle in which he expressly links the foundation of Massalia to Phocaeen sea trade. Aristotle, frag. 549 (Teubener).

⁷ Livy, 5.34.7-8; Timaeus, *F. Gr. Hist.*, 3B, 622, frag. 71; Pompeius Trogus, Justin, *Epit.*, 43.3.4 all agree on the 600 BCE foundation date. The 600 BCE dating is made clear by internal cross-reference of ancient authors. For example, Livy, 5.34.7-8 ascribes the foundation to 'the reign of Tarquinius Priscus,' which by Roman annalistic chronology puts the foundation between 616 and 578. In addition, Timaeus, *F. Gr. Hist.*, 3B, 622, frag. 71 puts the founding "120 years before Salamis," or 599-600 BCE.

⁸ Greek and Roman sources stress the foundation myth that describes intermarriage between the daughter (Gyptis) of the Segobrigian ruling family and the leader of the Phocaeen settlers (Protis). Descriptions of this myth are found in Hdt., 1.163-5; Thuc., 1.13.6; Plutarch, *Solon*, 2.7; Athenaios, 13.36.2-17; Livy, 5.34.8; Justin, 43.3.4-5.10; Strabo, 4.1.4; Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, 10.16.4.2; Hyginus, 7.11; Pomponius Mela, 2.77.3-4; Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, 3.34.6-35.1.

⁹ "The historical truth likely preserved by the Massalian foundation myth is that the emigrant Phocaeans were kindly received, and founded their colony by peaceful agreement with the natives, rather than by conquest." Hodge, *Ancient Greek France*, 65.

Mediterranean harbor, known as the Lakydon.¹⁰ This general consensus on the location and basic topography of Massalia has been of value to modern historians by providing them with a general reference point in planning archaeological excavations. Overall, an example of the ancient literary record's relative value to modern academia, in spite of its inherent flaws, can be seen in its generally coinciding descriptions of Massalia's origins and basic geography.

In spite of the relative academic value present in the ancient literary sources' basic descriptions of Massalia, any further knowledge they might offer on this polis is severely degraded by the presence within their pages of an obvious Hellenic cultural bias. This bias is evident in two main aspects of the ancient literary record on Massalia, namely its generally pejorative treatment of the Gallic natives, and its glowing portrayal of Massalia as a beacon of Greek strength and civilizing Hellenism in an otherwise brutish foreign land. An example of the generally derogatory characterization of the Gauls as bestial barbarians¹¹ in need of civilizing can be seen in the ancient authors' general description of their appearances as wild and intimidating.¹² For example, Diodorus Siculus in his *Bibliotheca Historica* relates that "The Gauls are tall of body, with rippling muscles...they are terrifying in aspect and their voices are deep and altogether harsh."¹³ This wild and savage categorization of the general countenance of the Gauls is echoed by Ammianus Marcellinus who describes them similarly as being "of tall stature, fair and ruddy, terrible for the wild fierceness of their eyes...The voices of them are formidable and threatening, alike when they are good-natured or angry."¹⁴ Overall, an example of the ethnographic bias against the Gauls present in the ancient literary record is seen in the derogatory descriptions of their

¹⁰ The ancient sources referred to are Strabo, *Geographica*, 4.1.4; Justin, *Historiarum Philippicarum Libri XLIV*, 43.7-8; Julius Caesar, *Commentaries on the Civil War*, 2.1.1.

¹¹ "The ancient authors' general stereotyping of barbarians by physical strength combined with moral and intellectual weakness makes them quasi-bestial." ed. Gruen, *Cultural Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Los Angeles, 2011) 260.

¹² In addition to the examples given in this paragraph, further descriptions of the wild and savage appearance of the Gauls are seen in Paus. 10.20; Strabo, 4.4.2-5; Caesar, *Gallic Wars*, 2.30-34; Appian, 4.7.

¹³ Diodorus, 5.28-31. Diodorus takes his negative depiction of the Gauls' physical aspects further by describing their practice of bleaching their long hair with lyme and pulling it back from their foreheads, "so that their appearance is like Satyrs and Pans, since...their hair...is so heavy and coarse that it differs in no respect from the manes of horses." Diodorus, 5.28.

¹⁴ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Rerum Gestarum*, 15.12. Ammianus (like Diodorus) goes further in his depiction of the terrible and violent appearance of the Gauls, by describing how their women were even stronger than the men, with flashing eyes and gnashing teeth. Ammianus, *Rerum Gestarum*, 15.12. Diodorus also offers a description of the savage and intimidating appearance of Gallic women. cf. Diodorus, 5.32.

general appearances.

Another example of the ancient literary record's generally derogatory view of the Gauls is seen in its descriptions of Gallic battle practices and attitudes towards war. For example, Strabo describes the Gauls as being "war-crazed and spirited and quick to battle, but otherwise simple."¹⁵ Cicero similarly describes them as being generally "*gentes bellicosae*."¹⁶ In addition, Diodorus Siculus offers disdainful descriptions of the Gauls' battle practices of stripping naked and working themselves into frenzies prior to entering battle,¹⁷ and then similarly relates their custom of cutting off the heads of their vanquished foes and proudly preserving them in oil for display in, or on, their homes.¹⁸ Diodorus finishes his diatribe against Gallic battle tactics by describing how they lack the military discipline of the Romans, they tend to scatter wildly in battle, and they rely heavily on individual combat by personal challenge, rather than coordinated military actions.¹⁹ Overall, the aforementioned derisive depictions of the Gallic attitude toward, and practice of, war offer another example of the clear ethnographic bias present in the ancient literary record.

Beyond their derogatory descriptions of Gallic appearances and battle practices, ancient Greek and Roman authors savage the general character of these peoples.²⁰ This can be seen in Aristotle's description of the Gauls as lacking true bravery and instead deriving their courage in battle from passion and temporary madness.²¹ Aristotle's sentiment is echoed by Polybius' relation that "Gauls act by *thumos* rather than by reasoning."²² This view of the Gauls as possessing a generally wild and

¹⁵ Strabo, 4.4.2.

¹⁶ Cicero, *Prov. Cons.*, 33.

¹⁷ Polybius similarly describes the battle tactics of Celtic warriors at the battle of Telamon in 225 BCE, and relates how the sight of these men, naked and wild, beating their weapons against their shields terrified their Roman opponents. cf. Polybius, 2.29.

¹⁸ Diodorus, 5.29. Diodorus makes a particular point of the Gauls' barbarism in this passage, by describing how they boast that they will refuse even the trophy head's weight in gold as ransom and prize these gruesome war trophies more than wealth. Diodorus Siculus, 5.29. Strabo also describes the Gauls' practice of taking enemy heads as war trophies. cf. Strabo, 4.4.5.

¹⁹ Diodorus, 5.29.2-3.

²⁰ The ancient authors' attacks on Gallic character are too numerous to list. A few supplementary examples are: Livy's description of their inability and unwillingness to tolerate hard labor: Livy, 27.48.16; Diodorus's description of their boastful and self-complementary nature: Diodorus, 5.29.3, 5.31.1; and their barbaric habit of drinking unmixed wine: Diodorus, 5.26; Strabo's description of their simple natures and quarrelsome tendencies being complemented by their witlessness and boastfulness: Strabo, 4.4.5; and disdainful descriptions of their practice of human sacrifice by Diodorus and Strabo: Diodorus, 5.31.3; Strabo, 4.4.5.

²¹ Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 3.1229b.

²² Polybius, 2.35.2-3. The idea of the Gauls acting out of passion rather than intelligence or bravery is also conveyed in Strabo, 4.4.5.

reckless disposition is further conveyed by Pausanias' description of their apparent lack of respect for the gods,²³ evidenced by a Gallic campaign against Greece led by King Brennus, during which "they did not desist from temple robbing...and plundered many temples including that of Delphi."²⁴

An additional instance of the reckless and uncivilized characterization of the Gauls by ancient historians is seen in descriptions of them as generally quarrelsome and violent in nature,²⁵ even amongst themselves. For example, Diodorus Siculus relates the Gallic practice of communal dining, and how during these during group meals, the Gallic men would commonly challenge one another to mortal combat over the slightest provocation: "...it is their custom, even during the course of the meal, to seize upon any trivial matter as an occasion for keen disputation and then to challenge one another to single combat, without any regard for their lives."²⁶ A final instance of the ancient authors' depiction of the Gauls as wild and reckless is seen in Diodorus's description of their tendency towards aggressive promiscuity and homosexuality: "their wives are comely...but they rage with lust, in outlandish fashion, for the embraces of males...they feel no concern for their proper dignity, but prostitute to others without a qualm the flower of their bodies; nor do they consider this a disgraceful thing to do, but rather when anyone of them...refuses the favour offered him, this they consider an act of dishonor."²⁷ Overall, the bias of the ancient literary record on Massalia is evident in its pejorative treatment of the Gauls, as seen in its condescending and disdainful depictions of the Gauls' appearances, battle practices, and general character.

²³ Pausanias elaborates further on the religious blasphemies of the Gauls by describing how carelessly they dispatched the bodies of their comrades who fell in battle. Pausanias, 10.21.6.

²⁴ Pausanias, 10.19.4. Appian also makes reference to the Gallic sacking of Delphi. cf. Appian, *Illyrian Wars*, 3.1. Cicero also makes reference to how "the Gauls have no fear of the Gods" Cicero, *Font.*, 27-29, and refers to this as driving Gallic attacks on Delphi (in 279 BCE) and Rome's Capitoline (in 386 BCE). Cicero, *Font.*, 30. Further instances of Gallic campaigns against Greeks are seen in Pausanias, 10.19.4-23.9. In addition to his depiction of the Gallic sacking of Delphi, he also describes various other campaigns under leadership of Gauls such as Cambaule and Cerethrius.

²⁵ Livy, 7.23.6 describes how the Gauls fought for the sake of fighting, and generally did not need a cause or reason to enter into battle. Ammianus similarly describes the Gauls as being "fond of quarreling, and of overbearing insolence" Ammianus, *Rerum Gestarum*, 15.12. Strabo also describes how "The Gauls are quarrel-loving" Strabo, 4.4.6.

²⁶ Diodorus, 5.28.5. Diodorus's account of the Gauls' habit of fighting amongst themselves during communal meals coincides with a passage from Posidonius, *Ath.*, 5.154b-d which similarly relates this practice, but attributes it to a desire amongst them for the "honor of being known as the strongest."

²⁷ Diodorus, 5.32.7. Strabo also makes reference to the Gauls promiscuous nature and tendency towards homosexual relations, but he attributes it as being mainly characteristic of their youth. cf. Strabo, 4.4.6.

The ancient historians' largely derogatory depiction of the Gauls forms a sharp contrast with their generally adulatory descriptions of Massalia and its citizens as strongholds of civilizing Hellenic influence²⁸ eagerly embraced by these native barbarians. An example of this is seen in Livy's description of the Massalotes as maintaining the traditional Greek tenets of a civilized society, in spite of being surrounded by the barbarism of their Gallic neighbors.²⁹ Justin complements Livy's view in his own depiction of how the Massalotes resisted the barbarism of the Gauls and acted as a positive, Hellenizing force by introducing them to the basics of civilized life, such as farming, building protective walls around cities, and living according to written laws.³⁰ This characterization of the Gauls as increasingly adoptive of Massalian ways is further seen in Strabo's relation that "Massilia was given over as a training school for barbarians ~~that~~ schooled the Gauls to be fond enough of the Greeks to even write their contracts in Greek."³¹ Strabo goes further in his depiction of the Greeks as Philhellenes, describing the aptitude with which the Gauls took to liberal studies once they had been tamed, and how they began hiring teachers and doctors to further their learning at public expense.³² Justin also makes reference to the Gauls' adoption of Massalia's Hellenic culture, noting that "under guidance from the Phocaeen colonists, the Gauls began to prune the vine and cultivate the olive."³³ Finally, the Cymian historian Ephorus, widely read and referenced in antiquity (by Strabo, among others), also characterizes

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²⁸ "The ancient sources describe Massalia as a city which had decided to remain unchanged in its archaic Hellenic shape." Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom: The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 56.

²⁹ Livy, 37.54.21-2. "The people of Massilia, whom, if inborn nature could be conquered, so to speak, by the temper of a land, so many untamed Gallic tribes around them would long ago have barbarized, are held in the same respect and deservedly paid the same honour as if they dwelt in the navel of Greece. For they have kept not only the sound of their speech along with their dress and their outward appearance, but, before all, their manners and laws and characters pure and free from the corruption of their neighbors." Livy, 37.54.21-2.

³⁰ Justin, 28.4.1-2. "From the people of Massalia, the Gauls learned a more civilized way of life, their barbarity being laid aside or softened, and by them they were taught to cultivate their lands and to enclose their towns with walls. They grew accustomed to live according to laws and not by violence, then they learned to prune the vine and plant the olive, and such a radiance was shed over men and things, that it was not Greece which seemed to have immigrated into Gaul, but Gaul that seemed to have been transplanted into Greece." Justin, 28.4.

³¹ Strabo, 4.1.5. Additional reference to the Gauls' adoption of the Greek alphabet: "Gallic mercenaries in Ptolemaic Egypt in the 3rd century BCE wrote inscriptions in Greek." Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom*, 53.

³² Strabo 4.4.2. Additional reference to the Gauls' increasing Philhellenism in Strabo, 4.1.5: "the barbarians who are situated beyond the Massalotes became more and more subdued as time went on, and instead of carrying on war have already turned to civic life and farming."

³³ Justin, *Epit.* 43.4.1-2.

the Gauls as becoming especially Philhellenic over time due to their interactions with Massalia.³⁴

Overall, the ancient literary record's glowing depiction of Massalia's civilizing effect on its indigenous barbarian neighbors points to its authors suffering from a blatant pro-Hellenic bias.

In addition to its depiction of Massalia as a center of Hellenic influence on the Gauls, the ancient literary record similarly attests to the city as being a mighty military power. For example, Pompeius Trogus's account (related by Justin) of the foundation of Massalia begins almost immediately by mentioning the great exploits of the Massalioles in defending themselves against the "fierce Gauls" and in successfully attacking those who had menaced them. It later notes how a neighboring barbarian tribe, the Ligurians, became jealous of the city's wealth and "harassed the Greeks" with war—which was continually repelled and matched by various Massaliote conquests—and their planting of defensive sub-colonies along the coast.³⁵ In addition to battling the Ligurians and other barbarian tribes, the Massalioles are described as being in a fairly constant state of war with numerous other peoples, including the Etruscans, and Carthaginians. In fact, Justin remarks that "the Massalioles often routed the Carthaginians³⁶ and spared them in their defeat."³⁷ Strabo similarly observes that in his time Massalia was filled with war memorials commemorating past naval victories "over those unjustly disputing command of the high seas."³⁸

In addition to its depiction of the Massalioles as bravely routing trade competitors and barbarian invaders time and again, the ancient literary record also generally describes Massalia as providing significant military support to Rome during the second and third centuries, though specific examples are conspicuously absent.³⁹ Most Roman authors simply make reference to how Massalia rescued

³⁴ George Grote, *A History of Greece: from the Earliest Period to the Close of the Generation Contemporary with Alexander the Great* (London: John Murray, 1862), 618. Strabo makes direct reference to Ephorus' characterization of the Gauls as Philhellenes, cf. Strabo, 4.4.6.

³⁵ Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 17. Pompeius Trogus cit. in Justin, *Epit.*, 28.3.

³⁶ Further evidence of this is seen in Thucydides 1.13.6, where he describes Massalia's routing of Carthage in a fierce naval battle.

³⁷ Justin, 43.5.

³⁸ Strabo 4.1.4-5. cf. Hodge, *Ancient Greek France*, 99 for further discussion of Massalia's various military engagements up to the Punic Wars.

³⁹ Kathryn Lomas, ed. *Greek Identity in the Western Mediterranean: Papers in Honour of Brian Shefton* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2004), 480.

Rome from the Ligurians and other barbarian tribes on numerous occasions, or as in the case of Cicero, “heap on Massalia, praises for past services largely unspecified.”⁴⁰ In spite of the general lack of specifics, a fragment of Sosylus hints at Massaliote military might as seen in their playing a vital role in acting as a naval force for the fleet-less Romans during the Hannibalic War.⁴¹ Polybius also offers a vague description of Massaliote naval heroics during this war, noting that “the sailors of Marseilles were the first in every service of difficulty and danger, and ready at the shortest notice to do whatever was required of them; and, in fact, Marseilles has distinguished itself above all other places, before and since, in fidelity to Rome, and never more so than in the Hannibalian War.”⁴² Overall, in light of its general lack of specific anecdotes, the ancient literary record’s repeated references to Massalia’s military might should be seen as a continuation of its general trend of depicting the city in an unrealistically positive light.

The ancient literary record’s biased portrayal of Massalia’s military power and Hellenic influence has imposed a serious handicap on modern historians’ understanding of this ancient polis.⁴³ However, over the past thirty years, as archaeological investigations of the region have improved,⁴⁴ these scholars have increasingly managed to sidestep this bias and gain insight into Massalia’s infrastructure and its complex relationships with surrounding Gallic settlements. An example of the value of the archaeological record in reevaluating modern misconceptions of Massalia can be seen in

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⁴⁰ Hodge, *Ancient Greek France*, 100.

⁴¹ As referenced in Norman Dewitt, “Massilia and Rome,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 71 (1940): 605. The source referred to by Dewitt is: U. Wilcken, “Ein Sosylusfragment,” *Hermes* XLI (1906): 103-141. See also Livy 22.19-20.

⁴² Polybius, 3.95.6-7.

⁴³ cf. Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 14-24 and Owen, *Analogy, Archaeology and Archaic Greek Colonization*, 2005, pp. 5-22 for detailed analysis on how ancient colonial encounters, as lopsidedly related by members of the colonizing powers (Greek and Rome), have influenced the cultural construction of modern European colonial ideologies and discourse, which in turn have reciprocally influenced modern scholars engaged in exploration of the ancient colonial encounters. (The same ideas are expressed in footnote 2).

⁴⁴ “Knowledge of the Greek colony of Massalia and its hinterland has undergone a major revolution in recent years as a result of both a series of large-scale excavations in the city and programmed campaigns of regional research stimulated by a series of thematic conferences (e.g., see Arcelin et al, 1995; Bats, 1990a; Bats and Treziny, 1986; Bats et al, 1992).” Dietler, “The Iron Age in Mediterranean France: Colonial Encounters, Entanglements, and Transformations,” *Journal of World Prehistory* 11, no. 3 (September 1997): 271. “The archaeological exploration and understanding of Massalia have undergone a dramatic revolution in the three decades since Villard and Benoit published their interpretations.” Dietler, “The Iron Age in Mediterranean France,” 280. “The past few decades have yielded an enormous amount of new archaeological data that have the potential to significantly transform our understanding of this encounter [between Massalia and the Gauls] and to make it an exemplary case study for an archaeological contribution to the comparative anthropology of colonialism.” Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 5.

its indications that the mighty characterization of Massalia by ancient authors is largely false. The first piece of archaeological evidence for this idea is the discovery, through excavation, of the small size of Massalia's *chora*;⁴⁵ as described by Archaeo-anthropologist Michael Dietler: "Massalia's *chora* are shown to have remained largely confined within a radius of 8 km from its port for a period of nearly 500 years from its founding."⁴⁶ In addition, Dietler notes that the majority of Massalia's *chora* was located in a valley, the Huveaune, directly encircled by fortified Gallic hill-top settlements.⁴⁷ The small size of the extra-urban lands that Massalia was able to effectively protect and control, coupled with their being in immediate proximity to settlements of often hostile indigenes,⁴⁸ points to the fact that Massalia's military might was heavily overstated by ancient authors.

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An additional piece of archaeological evidence that points to Massalia's strength as being greatly exaggerated by the ancient literary record is the minute size of its sub-colonies.⁴⁹ These colonies, such as Agde, Olbia, Hyeres, and Antibes, were founded along the French Mediterranean coast by Massalia beginning in the fourth century BCE as garrisons to ward off Gallic land incursions and piratical sea incursions against their trade routes.⁵⁰ Although Agde and Olbia—which have undergone the most in-depth archaeological excavations of Massalia's sub-colonies⁵¹—are described as

Comment [TAL4]: The same goes for Roulliard.

⁴⁵ "Chora: The extra-urban land under direct political control of a polis. An external territory of direct political control and agricultural exploitation." Walter Scheidel, *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge, 2007), 259. For further discussion of the term *chora* and its meaning see the round table discussion from March 16, 1985: "Le territoire de Marseille grecque" in *Etudes massaliotes*, CNRS, Université de Provence à Aix, ed. Michel Bats and Henri Treziny, 1985.

⁴⁶ Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 68. Dietler makes a similar assessment of Massalia's *chora* in "The Iron Age in Mediterranean France": "the weight of current excavations and opinion (e.g., Arcelin, 1986, 1992b; Bats 1986) supports a reconstruction of the extent of the Massaliote *chora* that is far smaller than that proposed by earlier scholars (e.g., Clavel-Leveque, 1977; Villard, 1960; Wever, 1966)" 271. Hodge takes a similar excavation-based stance on the small size of Massalia's *chora*, noting that "recent excavations imply that the extent of Massaliote political control inland was limited and never extended very far." Hodge, *Ancient Greek France*, 97-98.

⁴⁷ "Until at least the late third century BC, it [Massalia's *chora*] appears to have been confined largely within a radius of less than 10 km from the city, in the area of the Huveaune valley that was ringed by hills dotted with native settlements such as Les Baou de Saint-Marcel, only 8 km east of the port (Gantes and Rayssiguier, 1980; Guichard and Rayssiguier, 1993; Rayssiguier, 1983)." Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 70.

⁴⁸ cf. Bert Freyberger, *Sudgallien in the First Century BC: Phases, Consequences and Limitations of Greco-Roman Conquest, 125-22 BC* (Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999), p. 317 for further discussion of the idea that Massalia's small *chora* was defensive in nature, and was not a true area of political control, but rather a useful area for trade and exchange as well as a buffer zone between the Gauls and the city proper. "Evidence of both indigenous fortification and destruction is closely associated with the region around Marseille, amplifying the point that, even after 500 years, the spread of Massalian Hellenization so romantically described by Pompeius Trogus was scarcely in evidence." Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 168.

⁴⁹ Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 7.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 341. Defensive nature of these colonies as described by ancient authors: Pseudo-Scymnus v. 206-216; Strabo, 4.1.5, 4.1.9.

⁵¹ For further information on archaeological excavation of these Massalian sub-colonies cf. Pierre Roulliard, *The Greeks in the Iberian Peninsula, 800-400 BC*. (Talence, France: Université De Bordeaux III, 1991), 258.

resembling “compact fortresses,”⁵² geographically they covered pathetically small areas of only 4.25 ha and 2.5 ha respectively, thus leading to the questioning of their military effectiveness.⁵³ In addition to the implications offered by their suspiciously tiny size, “it is clear from both texts and archaeological evidence that neither Agde or Olbia nor any of the other Massalian colonies along the Cote d’Azur managed to wrest any significant territory from the natives.”⁵⁴ Overall, the archaeological indications that Massalia’s sub-colonies were both tiny and unable to challenge the Gallic natives’ hold over the surrounding areas point to the idea that the ancient historians’ characterization of Massalia as an impressive military power is largely false.

Another example of archaeological evidence that points to the ancient depiction of Massalia’s might as being false is the relatively recent discovery, through excavation, of the small size of the city itself. According to Dietler, “new archaeological evidence⁵⁵ is beginning to reveal a bustling port city of, at its maximum extent, about 50 ha.⁵⁶ Although this is vastly larger than any other colonial or indigenous settlement in Mediterranean France until the Roman period, it is small by the standards of Greek colonies, such as those in southern Italy, or Etruscan cities,⁵⁷ or even many of the *oppida*⁵⁸ of Late Iron Age temperate Europe.⁵⁹ These excavations of the city, coupled with archaeological studies conducted at Massalia’s surrounding funerary sites, have led many scholars such as Michel Bats and

⁵² Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 177.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 177-178.

⁵⁵ The archaeological excavations cited by Dietler in this instance are Bouiron, 1995; Conche, 1996; Gantes, 1990, 1992a; Gantes and Moliner, 1990; Moliner, 1996; Richarte, 1995 et al. See also Treziny, 1997. *Ibid.* 189-191, 194-196.

⁵⁶ ‘Ha’ is an abbreviation for hectares. 50 hectares is approximately equal to 123 acres, or .19 square miles.”By the Hellenistic period, the enclosed area of Massalia was 50 hectares in size” Lomas, ed. *Greek Identity in the Western Mediterranean*, 182.

⁵⁷ Treziny, 1986.

⁵⁸ *Oppida* (singular *oppidum* – meaning ‘defended place’) is the name given to the archaeological remains of ancient fortified settlements found throughout Europe. The term is derived from a word originally used by Julius Caesar to describe protected Gallic settlements he encountered during his conquest of Gaul in the first century BCE. Jesus R. Alvarez-Anchis, “The Iron Age in Western Spain (800 BCE – 50 CE): An Overview,” *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 19, no. 1 (February, 2000): 65-89.

⁵⁹ Audouze and Buchsenschutz, 1991; Collis, 1984; Wells, 1984. Dietler, “The Iron Age in Mediterranean France,” 281. Dietler makes further reference to how Massalia expanded to 50 ha over time: “On present evidence...it appears that **the first generation of colonists occupied only about 12 ha** on the western end of the peninsula...by the **middle of the sixth century BC** the settlement had grown to **about 30 ha**...By the **late sixth century BC** an area of **perhaps 40 ha**...was enclosed by a rampart. From the **late fourth through the second centuries BC**, the settlement expanded again to reach **a maximum size of about 50 ha** (Gantes, 1992a; Treziny, 1995).” *Ibid.* 282. Dietler puts the small geographic size of Massalia further into perspective by noting that “it was small in comparison to Etruscan cities and Greek colonies, especially those in southern Italy, most of which were **five to ten times as large**. Moreover, **Rome at the time of Augustus was over 35 times the size of Massalia’s maximum of 50 hectares**” Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 104.

Comment [TAL5]: Please include the titles of the reference material that you used concerning Bats and Ply. A date and a page number is not sufficient.

Michel Py to offer tentative population figures of 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants in Massalia at the time of its siege by Caesar in 49 BCE.⁶⁰ These estimates are bolstered by a general scholarly consensus on the idea that Massalia's small *chora* was of insufficient agricultural size to meet the subsistence demands of a population any larger than this.⁶¹ The fact that the city housed such a small population in a region as vast and heavily peopled as Mediterranean France further implies that its mighty ancient literary depiction should be considered highly suspect. Overall, excavation of Massalia has shown the city to have occupied less than a single square mile and contained no more than roughly 20,000 citizens at the peak of its existence.

In addition to indicating the false nature of the ancient literary record's depictions of Massalia's military power, the archaeological record similarly disproves its characterizations of the Gauls as Philhellenes. The first piece of archaeological evidence that goes against the Gauls being blind Philhellenes is the discovery of wine amphorae at lower Rhone basin settlements, indicating that Gallic contact with non-Hellenic Etruscans and Etruscan wine predated contact with Massaliotes by 30 years or more.⁶² This discovery points to the idea that when Massaliote merchants did make trade contact with the Gauls, sometime in the mid-sixth century, the Gauls would not have been as impressed with them as the ancient literary record implies, as they were already well acquainted with wine and experienced in long-term dealings with a foreign culture. Additionally, the archaeological evidence of Etruscan goods at Gallic sites is almost completely restricted to wine amphorae and ceramics related to the consumption of wine,⁶³ evidence that the Gauls, even at this early stage in their colonial encounter,

Comment [TAL6]: The footnotes 60-63 are very confusing for a reader who is not familiar with the subject matter of your article. Is there a way to clarify what exactly is meant by references to Dedet, Py, Morel. Etc.

They are all archaeological excavation reports. The footnote was not essential, so I just deleted it.

The rest of footnotes 60-63 are meant to support the idea that the Gauls had contact with other foreign peoples prior to the Massaliotes (like the Etruscans), so they would not have been so impressed by the Massaliotes that they would blindly adopt their Hellenic ways, but would have been selective consumers. Further evidence for the idea of the Gauls as selective consumers of foreign cultures is seen in the fact that the only Etruscan goods discovered by archaeological excavation were wine amphorae. (The Gauls' native drink was beer, the only product they were really interested in from these foreigners was wine, which was new to them)

⁶⁰ Michel Bats, *The Territory of Greek Marseille*, (Aix-en-Provence: Universite De Provence, 1986), 23. Michel Py, *The Gauls of Southern France: From the End of the Bronze Age to the Roman Conquest* (Paris: Hachette, 1993), 46.

⁶¹ Dietler, "The Iron Age in Mediterranean France," 286.

⁶² "In the lower Rhone basin, the first wine to arrive in the region came from southern Etruria, from Vulci and Caere. From the late seventh century BCE until the mid-sixth century BCE, Etruscan wine was virtually the only kind consumed in the region" Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 197. "In Mediterranean France, the colonial encounter was initiated during the late 7th century BCE when a ship-based trade began bringing goods from Etruscan city-states in west-central Italy to the shores of southern France." Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 4. "In the lower Rhone basin, Etruscan wine amphorae were only rapidly replaced by Massalian amphorae during the second quarter of the 5th century BCE." *Ibid.*, 211.

⁶³ "The range of Etruscan goods consumed in southern France was quite selectively limited, consisting overwhelmingly of wine (transported in a limited subset of Etruscan amphora types). This was accompanied by much smaller quantities of Etruscan drinking cups and wine pitchers." Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 197. For archaeological analysis of Etruscan wine amphorae see Dietler, *Consumption and Colonial Encounters in the Rhone Basin of France: A Study of Early Iron Age Political Economy* (Lattes: Association

were selective consumers of outside goods, rather than eager embracers of all things foreign.

Much like its indications on Gallic adoption of Etruscan wine and ceramics, the modern archaeological record similarly shows that in the early fifth century BCE, when Massaliote goods began to replace Etruscan ones at Gallic settlements, these adoptions were highly selective and largely confined to wine and ceramic vessels for storing and drinking.⁶⁴ In addition to highlighting the selective nature of the Gallic embrace of Massalian goods, archaeological excavations have shown that the Gauls practiced much more “negative adoption,” or conscious snubbing of Greek culture, than adoption of it: “The empirical evidence of archaeology has increasingly demonstrated that Greek culture was not passively emulated in a blanket fashion but, rather, consumed in a highly selective and creative manner--and ignored or rejected with equal selectivity.”⁶⁵ While the Gauls embraced wine and drinking ceramics,⁶⁶ they ignored Massaliote styles of dress, weapons, and religious practices, among other cultural aspects.⁶⁷

In addition, excavations of Gallic settlements in the Rhone basin have implied that the Massaliote wine and wine-related ceramics that were adopted by the Gauls remained largely confined to their elites, who used them to “symbolically mark class boundaries,”⁶⁸ and for the most part did not extend to the rest of the Gallic population. For example, studies of Gallic sites with high concentrations of Massalian objects, such as Mont Lassois and its associated burial sites at Vix and Ste Colombe, have shown that the vast majority of these goods, such as amphorae, ceramic drinking vessels, and more exotic bronze and silver drinking vessels, are clustered in burial mounds associated with Gallic

Pour Le Développement De L'Archéologie En Languedoc-Roussillon, 2005): 41-47; Gras, 1985; Py, 1995; Py, 1974. For archaeological analysis of Etruscan wine-related ceramics (drinking bowls, pitchers, etc.) see Boulamie, 1985; Dietler, *Consumption and Colonial Encounters in the Rhone Basin of France*, 59-61; Morel, 1981b; Py, 1979.

⁶⁴ “Excavation has shown that the articulation of Massalia’s trade with native societies depended for centuries primarily on two related products: wine and ceramics designed for its consumption.” Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 283. “The large presence of Massaliote drinking cups and amphorae at Gallic sites throughout ancient Gaul... indicate that wine was the primary basis for Massaliote-Gaul trade.” Lomas, ed. *Greek Identity in the Western Mediterranean*, 452.

⁶⁵ Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism*, 46.

⁶⁶ Even in their embrace of Massalian wine, the Gauls still rejected the Hellenic customs associated with it, as is seen in their preferring to drink their wine straight rather than mixing it with water, and their preferring to consume it at banquets with food, rather than in the Greek tradition of the *symposion* or the later Roman tradition of the *convivium*. Ibid., 64.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 337.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 464.

Comment [TAL7]: Please include a full citation for Kimmig.

Comment [TAL8]: Is the work by Aldhouse-Green different from the book cited earlier? The publishing date is listed as 1996 rather than 1995, but there is not another bibliographical citation under Aldhouse-Green. Could this possibly be a typo?

Please also include a full citation for Frankenstein and Rowlands.

leaders.⁶⁹ This has led many modern academics to view the Gallic adoption of Massalian and other foreign goods as being largely confined to rulers and other elite members of society. This concept of a “prestige-goods economy,”⁷⁰ where only the wealthiest members of Gallic societies had access to foreign goods and used conspicuous consumption of these items to distinguish themselves from the rest of the population, also moves away from the idea of Gauls as being eager Philhellenes, as the vast majority of them would have been unable to afford the luxury of adopting Hellenic ways.

In keeping with the excavation-based idea of the Gauls being highly selective in choosing which aspects of Massaliote culture to embrace, archaeological records also show that when Gauls did adopt a Massaliote product or custom, they did so in a manner that “Gallicized” it, or adapted it to their own independent cultural systems. For example, one of the biggest aspects of Massaliote culture, beyond wine, that the Gauls adopted was coinage. Gallic adoption of coinage in the Rhone basin originated in the third century BCE,⁷¹ and was heavily influenced by contact with Massaliote traders,⁷² but did not become prevalent in commerce for another century. However, in the first and second centuries, as the use of coinage became increasingly adopted throughout Gaul, and when various Gallic tribes began minting their own coins, they quickly moved away from simple Greek imitation and began to develop their own unique imagery: “The Greeks and Macedonians provided the models for the initial series of copies. The genius of Gaulish master-craftsmen then went beyond imitation to create bold, original designs.”⁷³ For example, in the Northern Belgic regions of Gaul where the Macedonian gold stater, first issued by Philip II in the fourth century BCE, became the model, minters from the Gallic tribe Parisii initially developed a Macedonia-Gallic hybrid coinage with a traditional Greek image of

⁶⁹ Miranda Aldhouse-Green refers to these as “paramount chief burial mounds.” Aldhouse-Green, *The Celtic World* (London: Routledge, 1995): 501. See also Wolfgang Kimmig’s ideas of these burial burrows as being “Fürstengraber,” or “chiefly graves.” Wolfgang Kimmig, *Die Griechische Kolonisation Im Westlichen Mittelmeergebiet Und Ihre Wirkung Auf Die Landschaften Des Westlichen Mitteleuropa* (Munich: Jahrbuch, 1969), 1-27. Wolfgang Kimmig, *Die Heuneburg an Der Oberen Donau* (Munich: Mainz Ro-misch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, 1975), 50-75.

⁷⁰ For further discussion of the concept of trade between Gauls and Greeks being based on a “prestige-goods economy” see Aldhouse-Green, 1995. For an introduction to the general concept of “prestige-goods” see S. Frankenstein and M.J. Rowlands, “The Internal Structure and Regional Context of Early Iron Age Society in South-Western Germany,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology* 15 (January 1978): 73-112.

⁷¹ Aldhouse-Green, *The Celtic World*, 248.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 252.

⁷³ Edith Wightman, *Gallia Belgica* (Berkeley: University of California, 1985), 19.

Apollo on the obverse and various distinctly Gallic images, such as men on horseback charging into battle, on the reverse. Over time, the Gauls' coins dispensed with Greek images altogether and became ever more symbolic and Gallic in flavor, as is seen in their use of "man-headed horses, triple spirals, and various other traditionally Celtic symbols."⁷⁴

Another example of the Gauls adapting an aspect of Greek culture is seen in their adoption of the Greek alphabet to write in their own language, beginning in the Rhone basin in the third century BCE. Archaeological evidence of this hybridized written form can be seen in the dozens of stone inscriptions, usually votive or funerary in nature, dating from the third century BCE to the Roman era, that have been found across Mediterranean France.⁷⁵ What these inscriptions tell us is that rather than abandoning their language and fully adopting one of the various Italic tongues to which they had been exposed, the Gauls adapted the Greek alphabet to express the words of their own languages, forming a hybrid written form of "Gallo-Greek."⁷⁶ The varied eras of Gallic history from which these inscriptions date indicate that this practice was not short-lived, but survived for centuries until the Roman conquest of Gaul gradually led to the full Gallic adoption of Latin as their language and alphabet in the early first century CE. Overall, the indications from the modern archaeological record that the Gauls maintained a strong sense of their own culture in adopting outside goods and customs, shows that the Gauls were far from eager Philhellenes who inherently viewed foreign ways as superior to their own.

The relationship between modern academics and the ancient literary record has grown increasingly complex over time as new perspectives on history and historiography have emerged over

⁷⁴ John T. Koch, *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 461. For further analysis of the development of Gallic styles of coinage away from Greek influence, see the discussions of the Belgic style of coinage in northern Gaul and the Armorican style of coinage in north-western Gaul in Koch, *Celtic Culture*, 462-464

⁷⁵ For further discussion of Gallo-Greek inscriptions, see P.M. Duval, "Les inscriptions gallo-grecques trouvees en France," *Actes du colloque sur les influence helleniques en Gaul* (Dijon : 1958), 63-69. In keeping with the idea from the previous paragraph of the Gauls adapting Greek and Macedonian coinage to their own native styles, Gallo-Greek and Gallo-Latin inscriptions have been found on a variety of Gallic coinage from the second century BCE until the time of the Roman conquest of Gaul around the middle first century BCE. C.J. Howgego, Volker Heuchert, and Andrew Burnett, *Coinage and Identity in the Roman Provinces* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 13.

⁷⁶ "Gallo-Greek inscriptions are those that are Celtic by language, and Greek by alphabet." Charles Ebel, *Transalpine Gaul: The Emergence of a Roman Province* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 31. "The Gauls learned to use the Greek alphabet largely for writing in their own language" *Ibid.*, 31. Later Gauls also developed a form of "Gallo-Latin" due to exposure to increasing Roman influence. However, by the first century BCE this was largely abandoned as the majority of Gauls began to fully adopt Latin as their language of choice. *Ibid.*, 32.

the past thirty years, highlighting problems of perspective and bias. As modern scholars have become aware of these problems, they have rightly turned more and more to archaeological excavations as a means for gaining uninfluenced perspective on the world of antiquity. The value of this archaeological approach can clearly be seen in the instance of Massalia and its relationship with the indigenous Gallic peoples of Mediterranean France. Although these Gallic tribes did adopt aspects of Massaliote/Greek culture, they did so selectively and at their own pace, while maintaining their own culture. Overall, modern archaeological evidence overwhelmingly points to the idea of the ancient literary record's characterization of both the Massaliotes and their Gallic neighbors as being false. In reality, archaeological evidence indicates that the power and Hellenic influence of Massalia was far more limited than what the ancient authors describe, and that the Gauls were much more independent of it as well.

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